A Local Solution to Malnutrition

Nairobi, Kenya

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Year Founded:
2013

Organization type:
nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector

Project Stage:
Start-Up

Budget:
$500,000 - $1 million

Website:
http://www.ecotact.org

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

The project seeks to ensure food security, improved nutritional status and reduced poverty of marginal and small farmers and their families through boosting agricultural production and improving income generating opportunities at the household and community levels through rabbit farming.

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

Challenge of poverty, hunger and nutrition are inherent. In Kenya An estimated 250,000 children under five are suffering from moderate acute malnutrition and 40,000 from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). Land available for livestock (meat) production is limited. The only real method of increasing meat production is to utilize the available land more efficiently. In Kenya effects of climate changes as been felt as witnessed by constant droughts and unpredictable weather patterns that have had a great toll on agricultural production and livestock rearing. This has lead to food insecurity and water scarcity which may exacerbate the high malnutrition rates. Kenya is currently marred by high unemployment levels among youth as well as abject poverty among rural communities.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

Rabbit production is one of the livestock enterprises with the greatest potential and room for expansion in Kenya. Studies have shown that rearing rabbits for meat production is a viable concept with ability to tackle nutrition challenges especially in the developing countries. In recent years there has been increased awareness of the advantages of rabbit meat production in developing countries as a means to alleviate world food shortages. This is largely attributable to the rabbit’s high rate of reproduction; early maturity; rapid growth rate; high genetic selection potential; efficient feed and land space utilization; limited competition with humans for similar foods; and high-quality nutritious meat (Cheeke, 1980). The realization that rabbits are well suited to rapid production of protein has increased the number of production units just like in poultry. Imperative Rabbit is higher in protein than other meats, lower in fat, has less calories and cholesterol free.

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

The main objective of the project which targets 1000 households is to ensure food security, improve nutritional status and reduce the poverty through rabbit rearing. Studies show that rabbit eat is rich proteins, its cholesterol free and contains essential minerals and vitamins. Activities • Identification of 1000 farmers for the project in 2 districts. Through a needs assessment and potential project implementation approach Ecotact will
identify 1000 farmers for the project. Provision of rabbit Kits to 1000 farmers. Ecotact will provide Rabbit Kit, consisting of breeding does, housing units, 100kg rabbit feeds and capacity training package. 

**Impact: What is the impact of the work so far? Also describe the projected future impact for the coming years.**

Ecotact envisages the Project having the following outcomes: 
• Enhancement of the nutritional status of farm families, especially the children and women members through increased consumption of rabbit meat. 
• Increased food availability in local markets and reduction of food insecurity and risk of hunger at the community level. 
• Increased income of over 1000 households. This will be instrumental in alleviating poverty and thus a step towards achieving the millennium development goal on poverty reduction. 
• Creation of employment for youths. 
• Enhancement of the knowledge base and skills of small-scale rural farmers in modern production, processing and marketing practices. 
• Increased awareness on rabbit rearing for nutritional value in the country. 
• Establishment of a functional R&D centre for providing a clientele service to backyard rabbit units. 

**Sustainability**

**Financial Sustainability Plan: What is this solution’s plan to ensure financial sustainability?**

The sustainability of the project will not entirely depend on financing component but also through other approaches. Financing - Through partnership with KIVA and other stakeholders, the farmers will be able to access micro credit facilities for implementation of the project. Ecotact together with other partners will provide a strong network for the rabbit production project. The networking will be instrumental in building sustainable capacity.

**Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?**

Currently there is a great demand for rabbit meat in the country due to the high nutrition component attached to it, thus it is expected that marketing of the products will not be a problem. Imperatively, one of the factors arising in the marketability of rabbit meat is the acceptability among the people. However, we project this not to be a problem, since most communities have been consuming rabbit in the past. And to ensure wide acceptance, an awareness campaign is already underway.

**Team**

**Founding Story**

The idea for this project was born as a result of close encounters in the rural areas of Kenya and based on the prevailing circumstance as regard to effects of climate change, limited land resources, operation costs compared to other livestock, ability for nationwide scaling up and imperatively by the nutritional value of rabbit meat compared to conventional sources of meat. It is no doubt that with the chronic malnutrition challenges affecting our communities today more so among the marginalized communities, rearing rabbits for nutrition and as a means for poverty eradication is a viable concept, which ought to be adopted not only in Kenya but in Africa at large, if we are to meet the 2015 millennium development goals. For instance most persons living with HIV, children and old persons require food rich in nutrients. This venture can offer alternative solution to such persons.

**About You**

**Organization:**
Ecotact

About You

**First Name**
Joseph

**Last Name**
Maingi

**Twitter URL**

**Facebook URL**

**About Your Organization**

**Organization Name**
Ecotact

**Organization Country**
, NA, Nairobi

**Country where this project is creating social impact**
, RV, Nairobi

**Has the organization received awards or honors? Please tell us about them**

Ecotact received numerous awards notably:
• Ashoka Fellowship on Public Innovation for 2007
• Lemelson Fellowship on technological innovations;
• World Toilet organization Hall of Fame 2008;
• Schwab Fellowship on social entrepreneurship 2009;
• Africa Social Enterprise of the Year 2009 by World Economic Forum,
• Citation by President Bill Clinton during the Clinton Global Initiative 2009;
• Public service award by African Ministers’ Council on Water (AMCOW)award 2010
• Guinness world record for most persons washing hands in one place-2010
• Dubai Award -Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment 2010/2011
Where do you ensure the availability of nutrients?
Healthy environments, Nutrient-rich farming, Full nourishment foods, Human wellness and vitality.

If you had greater capacity, which additional sectors would you like your solution to target - either through expansion, partnership, or thought exchange?
Healthy environments, Nutrient-rich farming.

How specifically would this added capacity help you improve the quality, efficiency, or sustainability of your existing product or service?

It is imperative to note that as much as we seek to tackle malnutrition through farming, it is critical to tackle problems that may hinder availability of healthy and nutritious foods. For instance through controlled organic farming of rabbits we can be able to ensure the produce is healthy and uncontaminated. Consequently promoting healthy environment is also critical to ensuring healthy and strong population.

Source URL: https://www.changemakers.com/nutrientsforall/competition/entries/local-solution-malnutrition